
Government of the District of Columbia



DC Department of Public Works

Testimony of
William O. Howland, Jr.

Director

**Public Hearing
Department of Public Works
FY 2009 Proposed Budget**

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND THE ENVIRONMENT
Jim Graham, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building
Room 412
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004



**TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM O. HOWLAND, JR.
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
ON THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS FY 2009 PROPOSED BUDGET
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND THE ENVIRONMENT
THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2008/2 PM**

Introduction

- Good afternoon, Chairman Graham, members of the Committee and staff. I am William O. Howland, Jr., Director of the Department of Public Works.
- I appreciate the opportunity to discuss Mayor Fenty's proposed FY 2009 budget for DPW, which is built on increasing efficiencies in our operations through strengthening management, investing in our workforce and expanding the use of technology.
- The mission of the Department of Public Works is to provide environmentally healthy municipal services that are both ecologically sound and cost effective.
- To that end, each day DPW serves 588,000 residents, 42,000 visitors and 388,000 commuters by providing the most fundamental municipal services across the District.
 - Each week, we collect trash and recycling from almost 110,000 households, which translates into 250,000 collections per week.
 - We promote efficient traffic flow along the District's commercial corridors to support our retail and other business establishments.
 - We assure residents' access to neighborhood on-street spaces by enforcing parking regulations.
 - We maintain the city's fleet of 3,500 vehicles.
 - We fuel more than 6,000 DC government vehicles, including those for MPD, Fire/Emergency Medical Services, DC Public Schools and the Water and Sewer Authority.
- In FY 2007, we swept 24,000 miles of commercial streets and 33,000 miles of residential streets. We abated 2,500 sites with graffiti, and we removed more than 1,200 dangerous abandoned vehicles from public and private space.
- We collected:

- 4,410 tons of bulk trash.
- 6,700 tons of trash from our 4,300 street litter cans, and
- 7,800 tons of leaves from residential neighborhoods.

Overview of the FY 2009 Proposed Budget

- Now, I would like to present an overview of the proposed budget.
- The proposed budget totals \$159,793,675 and will support 1,397.7 FTEs.
- The budget consists of \$117,958,000 in local funds, \$13,395,000 in special purpose revenue funds, and \$28,441,000 in intra-District funds.
- Traditionally, we compare the proposed budget with the current year budget to show changes in funds and FTEs. However, we believe comparing the FY 2007 budget to the proposed budget better describes how we view FY09 as a year to stabilize the initiatives funded in FY08.
- The FY09 to FY07 comparison shows a 13 percent increase in funds and a 2 percent increase in FTEs.

Budget Highlights: In FY 2009, We are Building on the Use of Sound Management, Employee Training and Expanded Use of Technology in FY 2008

- The remainder of my testimony will describe how we will build on the FY 2008 base of stronger management, increased training opportunities and expanded use of technology, which is laying the foundation for achieving a higher level of performance and accountability in FY 2009.
- DPW leads the metropolitan Washington area jurisdictions in the use of alternative fuel vehicles with 623 in our fleet. Its use benefits the region by reducing emissions.
- I want to thank Mayor Fenty for noting our success last year in converting 100 percent of the District's heavy diesel-fueled vehicles to ultra-low sulfur diesel.
- This year, he has challenged us to build on our success by switching from ultra-low sulfur diesel to B20 fuel, which is 20 percent bio-diesel fuel, such as vegetable oil. By doing so, we can achieve cleaner air by producing further reductions in emissions.
- The Fleet Management Administration ably achieved the Mayor's goal of 100 percent conversion to ultra-low sulfur fuel, yet it struggled to meet a performance target in another operation.
- In FY 2007, our light vehicle maintenance shop completed 36.6 percent of its work orders within less than 24 hours. The performance target was 95 percent. Obviously, something prevented achieving the results we had as our goal, and there was no quick fix at hand.

- In fact, we believed this was an opportunity to try something different. To that end, we introduced an integrated management approach.
- We brought together DPW leadership, including the Director's Office, Fleet, Information Technology and the Human Capital Administration, with Fleet's front-line and second-tier supervisors.
- This months-long undertaking more than doubled the light vehicle shop's productivity rate so that now it is completing 85 percent of its work orders within less than 24 hours.
- Intrinsic to this process is that our employees know they are valuable and that their managers are actively involved in providing the resources necessary to get the job done.
- I am fortunate to have very bright people in critical positions in DPW. I called upon their expertise to observe, probe, analyze and above all, recommend workable solutions that produced the turnaround.
- I would like to note that in FY 2009 DPW also will explore using a more effective reservation management system for our fleet vehicles. This approach can increase the utilization of District vehicles, provide greater service to our employees while promoting an environmentally-friendly, vehicle-usage policy.
- While Fleet's turnaround is evolving, we know this technique can be replicated in other areas of DPW.
- The management solutions team isn't resting on its laurels. Its next job is focusing on how the Solid Waste Management Administration's collections, street and alley cleaning and education and enforcement divisions' individual responsibilities influence the effectiveness of the other divisions to meet customers' quality expectations.
- As I noted earlier, our collections crews make 250,000 collections per week and the goal is to limit to only six complaints for missed collections per 10,000 collections, which at that rate is an industry best practice.
- So what does concern our customers? It's the quality of the collections: are the cans replaced properly; are the tops put back on the cans; did the crews spill trash or recyclables?
- DPW is driven by our service mandates. In the case of trash and recycling collections technicians, they were not able to take advantage of as many training opportunities as other employees.
- No more. By using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and logistics management software to optimize the routes, our sanitation crews have been able to improve on-time performance while reducing operating costs.

- In FY 2009, we will further optimize our routing to build in training periods so the people who actually pick up the trash and recycling cans also will be able to take advantage of training opportunities, thus improving their skills and increasing their value.
- Now, I would like to focus on our Parking Enforcement Management Administration, which already enhanced its management by establishing performance standards that increased productivity, attention to detail and professional pride.
- Today, our ticket writers, tow crane operators, boot crews and abandoned vehicle investigators have specific evaluation guidelines to follow to meet quality and accuracy, punctuality, professional appearance and teamwork standards.
- In FY 2009, we will continue improving parking enforcement through further use of license plate recognition technology. We have been using this technology to improve our booting program for the past two years. This year, we tested two new applications: Sweepercam and timed enforcement.
- Chairman Graham, I want to thank you for your clear support of the Sweepercam legislation. We look forward to using the technology during this residential sweeping season, which began last week and ends in November.
- You may have seen the media coverage of our newest application of license plate recognition technology to timed enforcement. We are winding up our pilot test of three vendors' equipment and we expect to make a decision later this spring.
- As well, we will begin optimizing routes used by our parking enforcement staff in FY 2009. By coupling our crews with state-of-the-art license plate recognition technology systems and more efficient routing, we will develop new, more efficient routes for our booting, ROSA and Residential Parking Permit enforcement crews.
- Finally, I would like to note that this budget fully funds the contract to transfer trash from the District's two transfer stations – Ft. Totten and Benning Road – as well as our overtime costs for parking enforcement and solid waste.
- This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer your questions.